# Survey reveals NHS doctors delivering care in unsuitable environments



A recent survey conducted by the Royal College of Physicians (RCP) has revealed that nearly 80% of NHS doctors have been compelled to provide medical care in temporary and often unsuitable environments over the past month. This troubling statistic emerged from a poll involving 961 medical professionals across the UK, uncovering a stark reality regarding patient care within the NHS.

The results showed that 78% of respondents had delivered care in non-traditional settings. Specifically, of the 889 doctors who provided further insight, 45% reported administering care in hospital corridors, while 27% indicated they used additional beds or chairs located in patient bays. Additionally, 13% stated they had given care in wards lacking dedicated bed space, and 9% had carried out medical assistance in waiting rooms. Alarmingly, 4.5% of doctors mentioned using areas not designed for patient care, such as bathrooms.

Dr John Dean, clinical vice president at the RCP, highlighted the gravity of the situation, stating, “These findings confirm what doctors across the NHS already know – corridor care is becoming routine, and that is simply unacceptable.” He further warned that treating patients in inadequate spaces risks their dignity, safety, and the overall quality of healthcare delivered, indicating it also places immense stress on medical staff.

The survey also revealed broader implications for patient privacy and safety. An overwhelming 90% of doctors admitted that care delivered in such locations undermined patient dignity and privacy, while 75% claimed they often struggled to access crucial equipment and facilities. Notably, 58% of respondents felt that patient safety had been compromised due to these circumstances. One physician shared a deeply concerning account, stating, “I have had more than one patient die directly as a result of not being in an appropriate clinical area — on a trolley in the corridor rather than in resus, as there was no room for them.”

The survey's findings resonate deeply with previous reports, including a January document from the Royal College of Nursing (RCN), which suggested that patients have died unattended in corridors while others have been left in distressing situations without appropriate care. This 460-page analysis gathered insights from over 5,000 nursing staff across the UK, illustrating systemic issues within the NHS.

In addressing these ongoing challenges, Dr Dean remarked on NHS England's decision to begin documenting the use of temporary escalation spaces across all NHS trusts starting in January 2025. He urged that this new data must be publicised and acted upon swiftly to initiate meaningful reforms aimed at expanding capacity, improving patient flow, and safeguarding patient safety.

Patricia Marquis, the executive director for England at the RCN, remarked on the implications of the survey, characterising it as indicative of an NHS in crisis, stating, “They know only too well the devastating impact of treating patients in corridors; it is undignified, unsafe, and unacceptable.”

Dr Nick Murch, president of the Society for Acute Medicine, echoed concerns regarding the ongoing nature of corridor care, noting that although the findings are troubling, they are not surprising. He attributed the situation to persistent issues related to workforce shortages and insufficient capacity, calling for long-term investment alongside necessary transformations specified by various medical bodies.

A spokesperson from the Department of Health and Social Care acknowledged the severity of the situation, describing the prevalence of corridor care as shocking. They noted the government’s efforts over the past six months to mitigate NHS pressures, which include ending resident doctor strikes to ensure staff availability and funding aimed at reducing unnecessary hospital admissions and delayed discharges. The spokesperson concluded with a promise for reform and investment as part of a plan to restore the NHS to a reliable state for public health needs in the future.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.rcp.ac.uk/news-and-media/news-and-opinion/the-voice-of-medicine-the-first-rcp-snapshot-survey-of-2025-will-help-us-to-advocate-for-patients-and-physicians/> - This URL supports the RCP's efforts to address corridor care and patient safety issues within the NHS, aligning with Dr. John Dean's statements on the unacceptable nature of corridor care.
* <https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/submission-to-the-review-body-on-doctors-and-dentists-remuneration-evidence-for-the-2025-26-pay-round/> - This URL provides context on NHS staffing and workforce challenges, which contribute to the conditions leading to corridor care due to insufficient capacity and staffing shortages.
* <https://www.rcgp.org.uk/representing-you/key-statistics-insights> - This URL highlights the challenges faced by GPs, including workforce shortages and insufficient time for patient care, which are related to broader NHS capacity issues.
* <https://www.rcn.org.uk/> - While not directly linked to a specific document, this URL represents the Royal College of Nursing, which has reported on systemic NHS issues, including patient care in corridors.
* <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-of-health-and-social-care> - This URL relates to the Department of Health and Social Care's efforts to address NHS pressures, including workforce shortages and capacity issues that contribute to corridor care.